

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **BC manufacturers surveyed in October were somewhat less optimistic about the future than they had been earlier in the year.** However the mood in BC is not as gloomy as it was last year. Twenty-one percent of manufacturers said they expected production to be higher in the fourth quarter, compared to 24% who were anticipating a decline. They were less upbeat about new orders, however. Just 13% expected new orders to rise, compared to 25% who anticipated that they would drop off. One in four said they expected to have fewer unfilled orders in the fourth quarter, compared to just 6% who thought they would be higher. Twenty-three percent anticipated that inventories would be too high, while 4% thought they would be too low. Shortages of working capital are expected to be a problem for 11% of manufacturers, while 9% anticipate that a shortage of skilled labour will hamper production. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Exports of BC products increased 1.3% (seasonally adjusted) between July and August.** Forest products, which make up about half the total value of BC's exports, rose 4.8%, posting a second consecutive monthly gain in August. However, energy (-7.0%) exports continued to slump, while shipments of industrial and consumer goods dropped off 4.1%. Machinery & equipment and auto product exports rose only marginally (+0.3%) but international shipments of agriculture and fish products grew 9.8%. US-bound exports were up 3.0%, largely due to an increase (+6.1%) in forest product exports. Exports to other countries fell 2.2% in August. *Source: BC STATS*
- **The number of Employment Insurance (EI) recipients in the province decreased 1.4%**

(seasonally adjusted) between July and August, falling to 65,460. Nationally, the number of EI recipients dropped 2.7%, with declines posted in every region except Yukon (+3.3%).

Source: Statistics Canada

Electric Power

- **Net generation of electric energy in BC increased to 5,510 gigawatt hours (GW.h) during August, up 27.0% from the same month of last year.** Exports of electricity also jumped 24.6% from 606, to 756, GW.h. Total Canadian net generation (+2.8%) and exports (+0.3%) also grew over the same period.

Source: Statistics Canada

Family Income

- **The average total family income (2 persons or more) in British Columbia was \$66,765 in 2000.** This is a slight increase (+0.8%) from 1999. Among the provinces, Alberta (+5.5%), Quebec (+4.9%) and Ontario (+3.8%) recorded the largest gains. Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest average family income (\$50,530) while Ontario maintained the highest (\$77,094). The national average family income was \$68,318, a 3.7% increase from 1999. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Median earnings for full-year full-time workers in British Columbia slipped 0.9% to \$25,045 in 2000.** Earnings in Victoria and Vancouver fell more than in other major urban centres in Canada. Victoria residents earned slightly less than the BC average with a median of \$24,093, down 5.2% from 1999. Despite falling 3.3%, earnings of workers in Vancouver continued to be higher than the provincial average at \$27,033. Workers in St. Catharines-Niagara (+10.9%) and Montréal (+10.8%) had the largest increases. *Source: SC, Catalogue 75-202-XIE*

Did you know...

Canadian students rank among the most connected in the world in terms of their access to computers both at home and at school

Correctional Services

- **British Columbia's incarceration rate in 2000/01 was 79 inmates per 100,000 population, just under the national average (80) for provincial/territorial prisons.** Nova Scotia (47), New Brunswick (48) and Quebec (56) had the lowest incarceration rates among the provinces, while rates were highest in Saskatchewan (150) and Manitoba (130). Territorial rates tend to be much higher due to their relatively small populations, with rates ranging from 235 in Yukon to 684 in NWT. The Canadian average including federal prisons was 133.

British Columbians faced total institutional operating expenses of \$146.5 million for provincial prisons in 2000/01. This was a 6.3% increase from the previous year, leading to a per capita cost of \$45.56, significantly higher than the national average for both provincial/territorial (\$38.46) and federal systems (\$41.28). Despite an 11.4% increase in total institutional operating costs, Quebec residents incurred the lowest cost per capita (\$24.98).

In BC, the daily cost per inmate was \$161.44. The cost of housing inmates was lowest in New Brunswick (\$88.08), while Newfoundland and Labrador spent the most (\$167.43). The national average daily cost per inmate in federal correctional systems (\$189.21), where more serious offenders are housed, remains much higher than in provincial/territorial ones (\$137.44).

Source: SC, Cat 85-002

Health

- **BC residents aged 12 or older had the lowest percentage of smokers among all the provinces (22%) in 1998/99.** At 30%, residents of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island had the highest rates of smoking. Canadian men aged 12 or older were more likely to be smokers than women (28% versus 25%). Young women, aged 15 to 19, were more likely to smoke than young men however (32% versus 23%). *Source: SC, Catalogue 82-221-XIE, Volume 2002, No 2*
- **In 1998/99, 81% of British Columbia residents aged 4 and older had consulted a medical doctor at least once during the previous 12 months.** Prince Edward Island had the highest proportion (87%) of its residents consult a medi-

cal doctor. Across the country, elderly people, aged 65 and older, were the most likely (91%) to consult a doctor, while youth aged 12 to 14 had the lowest incidence (71%).

Source: SC, Catalogue 82-221-XIE, Volume 2002, No 2

Education

- **The average British Columbian is more highly educated than other Canadians.** In 2001, 18.5% of BC residents did not have a secondary diploma, less than in any other province. In Newfoundland and Labrador, 35.7% of people had less than a secondary diploma, and the national average was 24.4%. Alberta had the highest portion of residents (52.3%) with either a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or university degree. British Columbia (49.2%), Ontario (50.0%) and Nova Scotia (51.9%) all fell above the national average (48.9%). Saskatchewan had the smallest proportion (43.9%) despite having one of the lowest unemployment rates (3.5%) among people with that educational attainment. The rate in British Columbia (5.5%) was above the national average (5.1%).

Source: SC, Catalogue 81-003-XPB

The Nation

- **Canada's economy inched ahead (+0.1%, seasonally adjusted) in August.** GDP in the goods-producing industries was down 0.4%, as all of the primary industries contracted. Manufacturing grew, but only marginally (+0.1%), while the construction industry advanced 0.3%. The service sector expanded 0.3% between July and August despite weakness in some of its biggest industries. The retail industry fell back 0.1% as shoppers kept their wallets in their pockets in August, and the transportation (-0.1%) sector slipped for the second month in a row. Finance, insurance & real estate, accommodation & food, and other personal service industries all stalled (0.0%). However, gains in the public administration (+0.4%), professional (+0.9%), administrative (+0.9%) and arts & recreation (+2.8%) industries boosted the economy's overall performance in August.

Source: Statistics Canada

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English Language Ability of Recent Immigrants

Over the last decade, about half of the immigrants landed in B.C. reported no English language ability on arrival...

English language ability of immigrants impacts on many government programs and policy. School-aged immigrants arriving from non-English speaking countries usually require special language programs such as ESL (English as a Second Language) during their first few years in the Canadian school system. Many government services that are available to immigrants might require translation and interpretation services. As the dominant source of immigrants continues to be Asian countries, the demand for these services will continue to increase, especially ESL programs where immigrant students usually require several years of English language assistance.

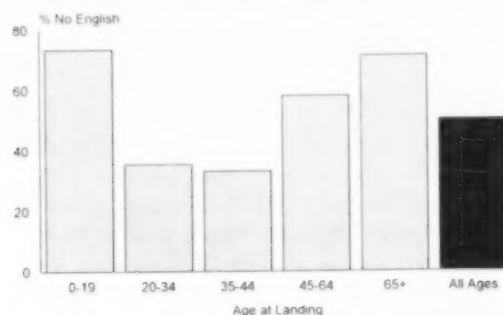
During the ten year period of 1992–2001, British Columbia received a total of 424,000 immigrants and half of which were not able to speak, read or write English at arrival. Of the 212,000 immigrants who had no English language ability, approximately 83,000 were under the age of twenty. Immigrants in this age group showed a very high proportion having no English language ability when compared to those at older age groups. Over the ten year study period, almost three in every four immigrants to B.C. aged 19 or younger

possessed no English language ability. This is higher than the Canadian average of about one-third of immigrants in the same age group who had no English Language ability.

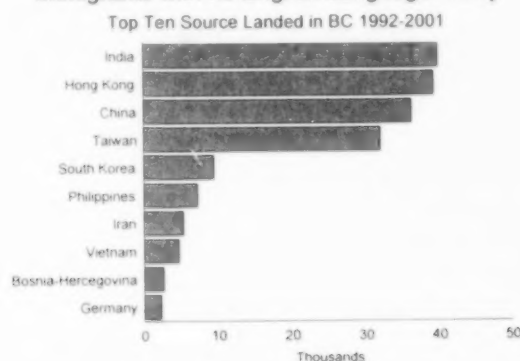
While immigrants in the older age groups tended to have better English proficiency the proportion that could not communicate in English was still significant. ESL training for adult immigrants as part of extended education has been in high demand. Immigrants will participate in this type of English language training program from one to several years while at the same time newcomers continue to create high demand for language services.

Immigrants in the 20–44 age group tend to have better English Language proficiency relative to those in other age groups. Upon arrival, many of these immigrants would either be seeking acceptance to post secondary education or finding jobs. While they possessed better English language, there were still about one in every three that could not speak, write or read English. In addition, the admission system does not require immigrants who are not the principal applicants to have their English language ability assessed. Hence, it is believe that a proportion of those who reported having English language ability did not actually possess a level of English language proficiency that readied them to enter the post secondary educa-

No English Language Ability at Landing
Landed B.C. 1992-2001



Immigrants with no English Language Ability

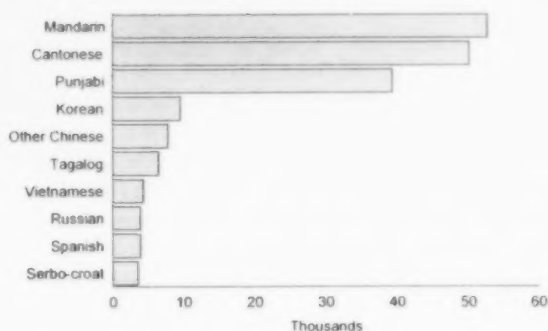


tion system or compete in the job market upon arrival. The same could also be true for immigrants in other age groups.

Most immigrants arriving with no English language ability were from Asia. During the period 1992–2001, of the top ten source countries of immigrants having the highest proportion of immigrants without English language skills, seven were in Asia. Almost seventy per cent of all immigrants without English language ability who came to B.C. during that period were from either India, Hong Kong, China Mainland or Taiwan. As a result, a majority of the immigrants who arrived without any English language ability have a mother tongue of Chinese or East Indian dialects. Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi are the most popular home languages spoken by these immigrants.

Top 10 Mother Tongues of BC Immigrants

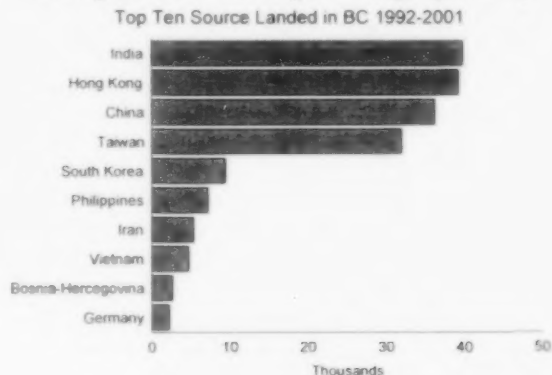
Immigrants with no English Language Ability (1992-01)



The majority of immigrants having no English language ability upon arrival were in the Family Class. This was mainly due to the fact that a high percentage of immigrants are admitted under the Family Class and that English language ability of immigrants in this category was not one of the criteria for their admissibility. However, in relative terms, immigrants in the Entrepreneur Class and Investor Class were more likely to lack English language skills. While immigrants in this category were admitted based on a selection system in which English language proficiency is one of the criteria, only the principal applicants in the family was subjected to the assessment. A high proportion of immigrants in these classes came as a family with middle-aged parents and teenaged children. Hence, the

proportion of immigrants in this category with no English language skill was still high due to the high number of non-English speaking accompanying family members.

Immigrants with no English Language Ability



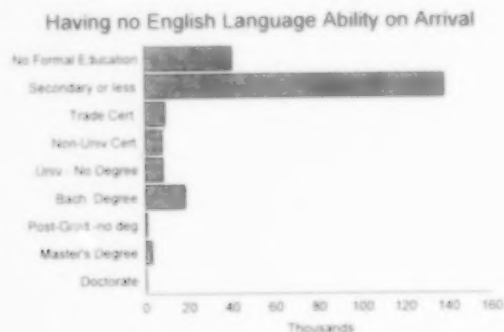
Immigrants in the Independent Class were the least likely to have no English language ability as they were skilled worker immigrants who were selected and admitted under a points system in which Canadian official language proficiency is one factor. Unlike immigrants in the business classes, independent skilled worker immigrants are less likely to arrive with a nuclear family. They are usually associated with fewer accompanying family members.

Female immigrants were more likely to have no English language ability than their male counterparts. Over the study period, immigrants who reported having no English language ability on arrival were 55 per cent female and 45 per cent male. Again, this could partly be due to the fact that a higher proportion of principal applicants were male where English language ability were assessed for admission purposes. Female immigrants were relatively more likely to be accompanying spouses or children.

While the majority of immigrants who have no English language ability were below high school education level, there was a significant number of immigrants who possessed post-secondary or higher education but were not able to read, write or speak English at time of landing. This observation applies to immigrants in all classes. Some of these well educated immigrants, while pos-

sessing useful occupational skills and academic qualifications, might find it difficult to integrate into the Canadian labour market during their initial settlement. Many may have to rely on English language training provided by the ESL program in British Columbia.

B.C. Immigrants by Education Qualification 1992-2001



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 also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		
	Jul 1/02	% change on one year ago
BC	4,141.3	1.0
Canada	31,414.0	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2001	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	130,396	2.2
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	125,534	0.9
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	30,648	-0.1
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	19,177	0.8
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Aug	2,909	3.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) Aug	2,425	-1.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Aug	3,332	4.8
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Sep '02	% change on one year ago
BC	118.8	1.8
Canada	120.1	2.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '02	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,180	4.1
Employed - BC	2,003	3.8
Unemployed - BC	178	8.0
	Sep '01	
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	8.1	7.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.7	7.2
INTEREST RATES (percent)		
	Oct 30/02	Oct 31/01
Prime Business Rate	4.50	4.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.30	4.90
- 5 year	7.00	6.90
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		
	Oct 30/02	Oct 31/01
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.5676	1.5867
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)	0.6385	0.6294
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '02	% change on one year ago
BC	668.84	3.6
Canada	654.18	2.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada
 Interest Rates, Exchange Rates Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
 For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

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- Business Indicators, October 2002

Next week

- Current Statistics, October 2002
- Exports, August 2002
- Tourism Sector Monitor, October 2002